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ABSTRACT

The 40 schools of practical nursing in Ohio have been challenged, along with all vocational education programs, by the State Board of Education to meet the need for a modern vocational and career education system. One of the goals that must be achieved to meet this challenge is to ensure successful completion of at least 80 percent of the students entering these programs. In order to determine the attrition rate of Ohio's schools of practical nursing, a questionnaire was developed and mailed to all of Ohio's schools. Twenty-three of the 40 schools responded to the survey (58 percent). The responses showed that Ohio schools of practical nursing had an attrition rate of just under 20 percent and thus were meeting the goals of the State Board of Education. Some schools, however, had much higher than average rates. The study concluded that the staff of the schools that were not meeting the 80 percent retention rate should focus on ways to decrease attrition. (The survey is included in the report.) (KC)

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ED 380 670

Attrition Study of Ohio's Schools of Practical Nursing

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Running head: ATTRITION IN OHIO'S SCHOOLS OF PRACTICAL NURSING

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Abstract

The schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio have been challenged, along with all vocational education programs, by the State Board of Education to meet the need for a modern vocational and career education system. One of the goals which must be achieved to meet this challenge is to ensure successful completion of at least 80% of the students entering these programs. During the fall 1994 Ohio Organization of Practical Nurse Educators meeting it was suggested by a representative from the Ohio Department of Vocational Education that the schools of Practical Nursing have a much lower retention rate than 80%. Results of the survey sent to all schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio show a mean attrition rate of 19.4% for classes, from responding schools, graduating in 1993 and 1994. These data show that the Schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio are meeting the challenge of an 80% retention rate overall.

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this research project was to collect data related to current attrition/retention rates in Ohio's schools of Practical Nursing. Each vocational education planning district (VEPD) has established standards and measures in accordance with the requirements of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990. The standard associated with retention in Practical Nursing programs as set in the State Core Standards and Performance Measures (1990) reads "VEPD aggregate totals will indicate at least a 80% retention rate for full-time adult vocational education occupationally specific program participants".

Even though there are no previous, published statistics regarding retention studies of Ohio's Practical Nursing schools; a report was given during the fall 1994 Ohio Organization of Practical Nurse Educators' meeting by a speaker from the Ohio Department of Vocational Education stating that the schools of Practical Nursing have a much lower retention rate than the prescribed 80%

Importance

"We have concluded that without major changes in the ways schools...train workers...no amount of macro-economic fine tuning or

technological innovation will be able to produce significantly improved economic performance and a rising standard of living" (Massachusetts Institute of Technology)

The challenge of vocational education is the challenge of improving the standard of life. The U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics predicts that 80% of all jobs in the United States don't require a college diploma, but do require proficiencies acquired through vocational education.

Even though the need for vocational education is apparent to all concerned, the limited available federal and state funding for education makes the Department of Vocational education very vigilant to which programs receive funding and what proportion of the funding they receive. The conclusion verbalized by the State Department of Vocational Education representatives in the fall of 1994 that the schools of Practical Nursing have a higher than acceptable attrition rate could be interpreted as serving notice to the Practical Nursing programs that they must take measures to improve retention rates. One could also conclude that failure to respond to the need for improved retention rates could be related to future redistribution of funding.

It was important to have an accurate documentation of current data concerning attrition rates and to answer the following questions.

Questions

The above concerns led to the research question: What is the actual average current attrition/retention rate of the schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio? Associated questions also include: What are the reasons for noncompletion of students starting the programs? Why do some schools have a significantly higher, or significantly lower, attrition rate than others?

Method

Subjects

All 40 schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio were surveyed. Data was obtained from school records. No individual students were identified. When compiling final data, no individual schools were identified.

Instrument used

The author constructed survey form was mailed to the coordinator of each of the 40 schools. The survey asked the respondant to consider each class started in 1992 and 1993. How many students started each class, how many completed. Additional consideration was given to where in the 1 year program the student dropped out. The respondant were also asked if there had been any change in their school's attrition in the last 5 years and if so, to what did they attribute the change. Included with the survey form was a date for return and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Results

Twenty-three of the 40 schools responded to the survey for a 58% response rate. The mean per school retention rate was 80.65% (n=23, range 48.7-93%, s.d. 9.51). The most common level from which students dropped was during the first 6 months. Theory grades, personal reasons and unsatisfactory clinical performance head the reasons for dropping.

Nine schools indicated no significant change in attrition during the last 5 years. Three schools indicated decreased attrition and attributed this to higher entry standards and earlier intervention for weak students. Six schools indicated increased attrition caused by serious personal problems, increased financial problems, increased family responsibilities and needing to hold down a full time job in addition to attending school.

Discussion

Even though the statistical data obtained indicate that on the average the schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio are meeting the 80% retention rate; there are schools with well below that percentage. This indicates the need for dialogue among staff of each of those schools to attempt to identify interventions to decrease attrition. Perhaps a good place to start is at the Coordinator's meetings where concerns could be discussed and successful interventions could be shared.

Shortcomings

The obvious shortcoming of this research data is lack of previous data upon which to make comparisons. The data would also have been much more significant with a better percentage response rate.

Implications

The data answers the research question concerning attrition rates

for the schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio. The associated questions having to do with reasons for noncompletion have also been addressed. Speculation as to why the schools vary so much is possible, based on responses; however this is worthy of further exploration.

Conclusions

All schools must adjust whatever is necessary in their programs to individually achieve the minimum 80% retention rate- 20% attrition rate. Open, objective dialogue must be undertaken to identify weak areas that are keeping some schools attrition rates higher than 20%.

It is essential that schools keep focused on the ultimate objective of improving the standard of living in the United States and use this as their motivation for program and self-evaluation leading to decreased attrition rates.

References

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Commission on Industrial Productivity, Made in America quoted in Ohio Department of Education. (1990) Ohio's Future at Work: Action Plan for Accelerating the Modernization of Vocational Education in Ohio. [Brochure]. Columbus, Ohio.

Penta County Joint Vocational Schools. (1990) State Core Standards and Performance Measures. Rossford, Ohio.

Appendix A

Bowling Green Area School of Practical Nursing

140 South Grove Street, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402
PH: (419) 352-2716

William H. Hall, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Lynda Ropiak, R.N., M. Ed.
Coordinator

November 11, 1994

PN Addresses:NOT ON DESKTOP
PN Addresses:NOT ON DESKTOP
PN Addresses:NOT ON DESKTOP
PN Addresses:NOT ON DESKTOP

Dear Coordinator;

The State Core Standards for vocational and career education programs states that full-time adult vocational education occupationally specific programs will have at least an 80% retention rate It is projected that L.P.N. programs have a much lower rate of retention than other adult vocational education programs.

I am collecting data to determine current attrition rates for our schools of practical nursing in Ohio. In addition I am interested in any recent change in attrition rates and perceived reasons for such change.

This data will be used as a basis for my graduate research project entitled "Attrition Study of Schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio". The results will be made available to the OOPNE newsletter for publication.

Please return the completed survey form in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope by November 20, 1994.

Thank you for your time,

Carolyn H. Webb, R.N., B.S.N.

Appendix B

"Attrition Study of Schools of Practical Nursing in Ohio
Survey Form

Please consider each class started since January 1992.

	1992		1993	
	1st class	2nd class	1st class	2nd class
Number started (each class):				
Number completed (each class):				
Point in program where dropped? (week or quarter)				

Reason for drop? (example: grades, unsatisfactory clinical, personal)

Has there been any change in your school's attrition in the past five years?
If yes; increase or decrease in attrition rate?
Have you identified any reason for change in attrition? If so what is the identified reason for change?

Thank you for participating in this research study. If you would like to receive a report of the results of this research study please indicate by including name and address here.